

FAS is among the biggest government customers for Landsat imagery to stay abreast of daily changes around the world. It spends about \$4 million per year on data products, mainly with companies that develop advanced products from raw Landsat satellite images.

FAS launched a new contract March 1 that is designed to allow its satellite imagery acquisition process to make better use of its limited budget, said Brad Doorn, remote sensing coordinator for the FAS' Crop Assessment Division.

Currently, Radarsat International of Richmond, British Columbia, procures satellite imagery for FAS from Landsat and Canada's Radarsat spacecraft, while Earth Satellite Corp. of Rockville, Md., provides FAS with data from sources outside of North America.

The new approach calls for a single company to oversee satellite imagery acquisition for FAS, focusing not on obtaining a certain number of scenes per year but on delivering specific information, Doorn said. The agency is hoping that a new approach will help the



USDA

A Feb. 15 image of Queensland, Australia, shows flooding.

agency use its budget in a more effective manner by eliminating spending on imagery that may not provide the information the agency needs, he said.

"We have to monitor all the international crop regions — period," Doorn said. "I have the resources to do only a small fraction of that. I know I'll never have the resources to do everything, so I need to be able to use those re-

sources that can be used to monitor the regions of reservoirs around the globe, Doorn said.

The new contract, awarded by FAS to ASRC Management Services of Greenbelt, Md., took effect March 1. The initial value of the deal is \$2 million to cover the last six months of the 2005 budget year. It also includes four one-year options valued at \$4 million per year, Doorn said.

FAS will not direct ASRC on which satellite imagery to buy, only which information to deliver. "I'm sure we will still be using Landsat data and still be using weather data," Doorn said. "The real goal here is to have a contract with a company that gives them more flexibility to handle the acquisition of the products. The company can do what they feel they can do from a business standpoint, which should give them more creativity and allow them to be more innovative."

Doorn hopes the acquisition of all satellite data by FAS will fall under the new contract by Oct. 1.

JASON BATES

GSA solicits input on IT contracts

The General Services Administration on March 31 will release draft requests for proposals for two new information technology governmentwide contracts.

The Alliant contract, which will be worth as much as \$50 billion, and its small-business version, the \$15 billion Alliant SB, will both be five-year deals and include one five-year extension option. Alliant will allow up to 20 vendors, and the small-business variant will allow up to 40 vendors.



The contracts replace the expiring Millennia and ANSWER vehicles.

GSA said it will listen to industry's comments on the draft RFP. The final RFP will be released in July, and GSA will award the contracts in March 2006.

Neal Fox, GSA's assistant commissioner for commercial acquisition, said soliciting separate GWACs is the best way to support small businesses. The Alliant SB contract will also benefit firms owned by service-disabled veterans. The government wants 3 percent of all federal contracts to go to veteran-owned businesses.

Fox said small companies will be able to bid on the larger contract. The RFP may allow large companies to be subcontractors to small businesses on Alliant SB.

STEPHEN LOSEY

Eight small businesses hired to resell, recycle, dispose of old computers

Government managers with obsolete computers don't have to send them to landfills or stash them unused in closets anymore. The Environmental Protection Agency has contracted with eight small businesses to manage and track the reusing, reselling, recycling and disposal of the 10,000 computers the EPA estimates the government disposes of every week.

"About 20 percent of the items, they can refurbish and reuse," said Oliver Voss, who directs the EPA's Recycling Electronics and Asset Disposition (READ) Services program.

Voss has been working on the process to eventually award the governmentwide acquisition contracts since 2003. In December, eight contracts were awarded to small businesses to pick up unwanted computers or electronics from agencies.

First, however, the equipment must be listed on a General Services Administration Web site for 21 days, under a federal initiative called Computers for Learning. This allows officials at schools and federal agencies to claim anything they can use.

"But once it's passed that three-week window, we can send it back to the contractors," said Voss.

The contracts aim to help agencies meet requirements of Executive Order 13101, Greening the Government through Waste Prevention, Recycling and Acquisition.

The eight governmentwide acquisition contracts are for one year, with four one-year extensions possible, according to EPA. The combined potential value is \$9 million, according to an EPA news release on the contracts.

The contracted companies must follow guidelines set by EPA, which aim to reuse as many personal computers and components and other electronic equipment as possible and reduce chemicals in the waste stream.

Each computer monitor contains six pounds of lead, according to Voss. Other chemicals in electronic equipment include mercury, chromium, cadmium and beryllium. Not only are the chemicals harmful to the general population, improper disposal poses liability risks for federal facilities, he said.

Reuse is the preferred method of handling surplus equipment, according to the EPA Web site. One such option involves reselling. A share-in-savings program, part of the GWACs, helps

push down the price agencies have to pay for the resale services.

Liquidity Services Inc. of Washington is the only online auction company to be hired for reselling electronic equipment. Like the other seven firms, Liquidity Services is required to maintain an audit trail to the equipment's final destination.

Under the contracts, each company must evaluate every item it receives to determine its future value. The companies will:

- Refurbish and resell, using the proceeds to offset costs.
- Donate to charitable causes.
- Recycle as much as possible.
- Properly dispose of the remaining equipment.

Companies winning contracts in addition to Liquidity Services: MOLAM International Inc. of Marietta, Ga.

Supply-Chain Services Inc. of Lombard, Ill.

UNICOR, Federal Prison Industries of Washington.

Asset Recovery Corp. of St. Paul, Minn.

Hesstech LLC of Edison, N.J.

Global Investment Recovery Inc. of Tampa, Fla.

HOB International of Batavia, Ill.

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